

COLLABORER

January • February 2006



A Legacy of Laughter **DEFINING DANIEL**

SAYING GOODBYE **Hiding Out with Elijah** **Heart to Heart**
BUILDING STRONG MARRIAGES A DOZEN DOSES OF FUN

Women Nationally Active for Christ



Sarah Fletcher

"You've cooked supper; I wasn't expecting this," my 92-year-old mother-in-law remarks almost every evening as she makes her way to our table. While she may have asked me repeatedly when supper would be ready, in that moment, she perceives herself an invited guest. "Thank you for the good meal. I just love coming to your house to eat," she commented the other evening. Coming to our house involves walking through an entry room that divides "their part" from "our part" of the house. Since my father and mother-in-law moved in with us over a year ago, we've rediscovered that meal-

time and life can be a challenging mix of humor and humility. God is teaching me the importance of feasting.

Daily, in His Word, He sets a feast before me. Though I have eaten at the table countless times—even become impatient and complained about the fare—may I, like my mother-in-law, perceive myself an invited guest. Coming to His house involves leaving "my part" and entering His domain. However, unlike the thrown-together suppers I often serve, each meal in His presence is lavishly prepared.

Don't you love holiday meals or company spreads—when there's no rush and the most important items on the agenda are fellowship and food? That's the kind of feast the Father longs for us to find.

It's a feast that *"satisfieth the longing soul and filleth the hungry soul with goodness"* (Psalm 107:9). No doubt, that's the nourishment Daniel and his friends needed as they determined not to eat Nebuchadnezzar's gourmet diet.

It's a feast in the midst of adversity. The Psalmist declared, *"Thou preparedst a table before me in the presence of mine enemies."* Within our homes, at our jobs, in ministry or on mission fields, the enemy wields his woes. Though he seeks to devour, he is no match for our Host, who surrounds us with His presence.

It's a feast that never ends. Imagine a 24/7 Thanksgiving dinner—with no calorie consequences. And, unlike the leftovers that WNAC President Debe Taylor describes, the food of the Word is always fresh and new.

The writer of Proverbs says, *"All the days of the afflicted are evil: But he that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast."* Each day brings a choice. We can chew on complaints or on cheer. This personal menu selection affects meal planning for others. Our heart attitude determines the place setting. Will we serve fine-linen laughter, or our tupperware troubles?

Continual feasts are possible only through continual communion with Christ. In those manna moments, the world's fast food and frozen dinners fade and we feast, savoring each morsel, gaining strength to maintain a merry heart.

Oh Christ, I love it here! It is our place.

Speak Lord or not. Touch me or not. Show then

Your will or bid me wait in patient grace.

Fill all my hungry need with joy again.

—Calvin Miller

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DEFINING DANIEL

BY JUDY DELONG

Today's world tempts us to go along with the crowd and not take a stand against sin. Daniel was and is an example of someone who set his affections on things above and not on things on the earth. What defined his character and made him such an example? Let's look and see.

DECISION

The time was 600 B.C. The nation of Israel had been divided into the northern kingdom of Israel and the southern kingdom of Judah. In the third year after Jehoikim became king, the Lord gave Judah into the hand of Nebuchadnezzar, the king of Babylon. The people of Jerusalem were taken captive. Among the captives were four young men: Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah.

One day the king asked that the best of the captives be brought before him. These were children of Judah's royal family and other Judean nobility. They were strong, healthy, good-looking young men, gifted with wisdom and potential necessary for serving in

the royal palace. The chosen young men, including Daniel, Hananiah, Mishael, and Azariah, were appointed a portion of the king's meat and the wine which he drank. They would be nourished with this royal dietary regiment for three years.

However, Daniel made a decision....he purposed in his heart that he would not defile himself with the king's meat (v.8). God had made very clear to His people what they were and were not to eat. The king's offerings were not permissible under Jewish dietary law. Because Daniel had set his heart to serve God, he did not want to displease God by eating and allowing something not approved by God to enter his body. Daniel made a decision concerning what he would and would not do.

For January program presentation ideas and helps see the 2006 Program and Plan Book, pp. 22-25

DIET

Having made up his mind not to defile himself by eating the king's meat, Daniel asked permission to eat other things instead. God had gave Daniel favor in the eyes of the prince of the eunuchs who was over him. Still, the prince was alarmed by Daniel's suggestion, afraid that if Daniel and his friends appeared paler and thinner than those who ate the prescribed foods, the king would take his life.

Not willing to compromise his convictions, Daniel then asked Melzar, whom the prince had put in charge, if he would give the four of them a chance. They would eat vegetables and water for ten days; then, Melzar would check them out. If their appearance was not suitable at the end of ten days, Melzar could do as he pleased with them.

Daniel made a decision not to do certain things and he set his heart to do the right thing. Have we made these choices in our lives? Will we decide not to consciously do anything contrary to God's Word or anything that we know will defile our lives or our testimonies?

Daniel determined what he would allow in his life. Have you chosen a diet for your own life? Yes, it's important to eat healthy foods and be good stewards of our bodies. But nutritionists conclude that diets concern not only food but also life choices. What's on the menu of your mind? Choose a regiment that does not feed on the things the world has to offer, but rather fills your heart and mind with the things of God.

DIFFERENCE

At the end of the ten days, Melzar found the four men's countenances not only suitable, but also fairer and fatter in flesh than all who had eaten the portion of the king's meat. He allowed the four friends to remain on their vegetable and water diet throughout the course of their training.

When we set our hearts to serve and obey God, people notice a difference. Does the world recognize you as different? Do you fit in with everybody else or do you stand apart? If you were lined up with your unsaved friends or co-workers, would there be a difference in the way you act, the way you talk, or the way you dress? God's Word tells us to come out from among the world and be a separate people.

DEVELOPMENT

Because these Hebrew boys were willing to fully obey the Lord, He gave them knowledge and skill in learning and wisdom. God gave Daniel understanding of visions and dreams.

At the end of the appointed days the king found the four young men wiser in all matters, ten times better



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than his royal magicians and astrologers. If we set our hearts to do what is right in God's eyes, He will set us apart from the world. He will use us in His kingdom. Often, He will set us in places of honor.

How's your spiritual development? Are you growing in the knowledge and grace of our Lord? Do you sense God's hand at work in your life? We, too, must someday appear before the King to be judged on what we've done in this life...whether we've developed a consistent walk with Him and whether we've stood for right. *"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ; that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad"* (2 Corinthians 5:10).

DEDICATION

Many years transpired between the events recorded in Daniel chapter one and chapter six. Darius, now the reigning king, set one hundred twenty princes in authority over the whole kingdom. Over these princes, the king placed three presidents who would watch out for his interests and make sure he did not suffer loss. One of these presidents was Daniel.

Early in his life, Daniel set his heart on serving God; now God had lifted him to a prominent place in the kingdom. The king even considered placing Daniel over the whole realm. The Bible says that Daniel was preferred above the other presidents and princes because of the excellent spirit within him. What a testimony! Daniel was past 80 years old at this time. Dedication to his decision made as a young man determined his destiny as an old man. However, jealousy reared its ugly head as the other princes and presidents sought to find something against Daniel. They could not find anything wrong in his life. *"Neither was there any error or fault found in him" (6:4)*. When their search to dis-

cover something amiss in Daniel's business dealings came up empty-handed, his accusers pounced upon his personal life. They looked for a legality concerning the law of Daniel's God.

The men went to the king and asked him to make a decree. Anyone who asked a petition of any god or man, other than King Darius, within thirty days, would be thrown into the den of lions. Flattered by this prideful suggestion, the king enacted the petition and signed the decree.

When Daniel learned this decree had been established, he went to his house, knelt at an open window and prayed to his God, just as he had always done. Despite the threat of being thrown to the lions, Daniel was determined to continue to call upon his God. Because he had set his heart on serving God many years before, Daniel never wavered in his worship.

DILEMMA

Knowing Daniel's consistent life, the men watched and waited, anticipating his response. When they observed him disobeying the decree and making supplication before his God, they immediately went to the king. (Oh, that the worst thing said about us is that we pray.)

The men reported that Daniel had disobeyed the king's own law; Daniel must be thrown into the lions' den. The king was sorry about the decree because he liked Daniel and recognized that Daniel had taken good care of his business affairs. But, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, the decree could not be altered. The king tried to find a loophole allowing for Daniel's deliverance, but there was no way. Daniel was lowered into the den of lions.

Sometimes when we take a stand for God and for His Word, we may find ourselves in frightening situations. We're told that Satan, like a roaring lion, goes to and fro, seeking whom he may devour. He is out to destroy our lives and the world stands ready to throw us to him. In times of dilemma, we can know that greater is he that is in us, than he that is in the world.

DELIVERANCE

Talk about a testimony! Having seen Daniel's dedication to his God, the king believed that God would deliver Daniel (v. 16). However, a stone was brought and laid at the mouth of the den and a seal from the king's ring was put upon it that the decree might not be changed concerning Daniel. Have you ever felt like you've been thrown to the lions—when nothing is going right and everyone is against you?

How confused Daniel must have felt, cast into that dark, dingy den? Would God desert him? Why would He allow something like this to happen, when Daniel had set his heart upon God?

The king was unable to sleep that night; he was up and about early the next morning, standing at the mouth of the den, crying out to Daniel, *"O Daniel, servant of the living God, is thy God, whom thou servest continually, able to deliver thee from the lions?"* Then Daniel cried back, *"O king, live forever! My God has sent his angel and hath shut the lions' mouths, that they have not hurt me."* Daniel said God had protected him because of his innocence. Daniel had not wronged the king but more importantly, he had not wronged God. Are we dedicated to doing what is right in spite of what it might cost us? Like Daniel, when we find ourselves in the "lions' den", we will find that God is there with us.

DESTINY

After Daniel was released, the king sent for Daniel's accusers. They were cast into the den of lions—not just the men, but their wives and their children. The lions tore them apart before they ever reached the bottom. Sin not only affects us, but it can affect our families as well.

Then the king sent out another decree, *"That in every dominion of his kingdom, that men tremble and fear before the God of Daniel...for He is the living God and stedfast forever, and his kingdom that which shall not be destroyed, and his dominion shall be even unto the end...He delivereth and rescueth and He worketh signs and wonders in heaven and in earth, Who hath delivered Daniel from the power of the lions."*

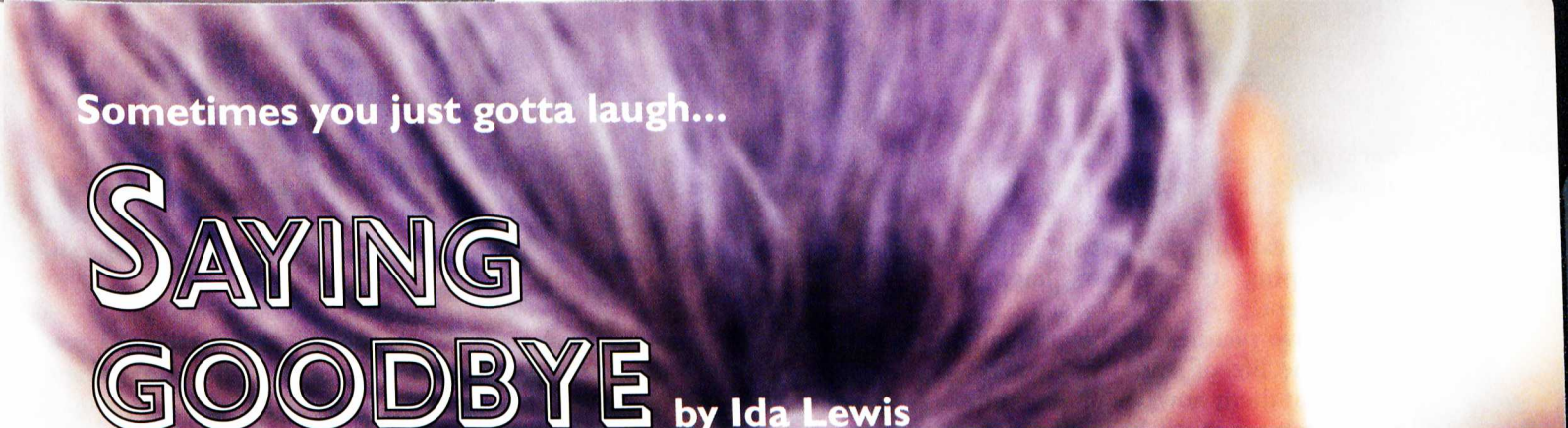
Daniel, by his life, demonstrated to the king that his God was the one true God. This should be the destiny of each of us today—that our lives reveal God to others. How can we do this? Like Daniel, we can purpose—set our hearts—not allowing the world around us to defile us, remaining faithful to God in the midst of adversity, and dedicating ourselves to Him alone.

DEFINITION

What defines you? Have you purposely determined to follow God? Though the "early in your life" may have past, it's never too late to make this decision. Set your heart, from this day forward, to fulfill your destiny as a witness to the world around you that our God is the one true God.



Judy Delong lives in Hager Hill, KY and is active in the Toms Creek FWB Church, Nippa, KY. She and her husband Teddy are parents of three grown sons and grandparents of six. A song writer and musician, Judy enjoys singing, speaking and Bible studies. Judy currently serves as a member at large for Kentucky Women Active for Christ.



Sometimes you just gotta laugh...

SAYING GOODBYE

by Ida Lewis

THE DOOR OPENED and there she stood, timidly peering at us through cataract-clouded eyes. My family and I had arrived to pack up my aunt's belongings and bring her to live with us. We had no real idea of the tremendous change that move would bring to our lives.

Visiting over time, we'd noticed that Aunt Anne was losing weight. We could tell she wasn't buying many groceries. The day came when we arrived to find the house cold and the refrigerator empty (except for indescribable objects covered with growing green fuzz).

My aunt had always taken tremendous pride in her home and her appearance. She never wanted to admit she needed help. Her husband had been dead for many years; she had no children. With driver's license denied due to cataracts, she'd become a virtual prisoner in her own home. It was time to step in and help.

In two days and nights, my husband, son, daughter and I packed and labeled everything in her two-story house. By the morning of the third day, it was all loaded onto a moving van and headed for our home. Anne and her husband had built their house situated on a hill during the depression. She'd lived there 51 years—almost to the day—when she left to come live with us. Anne looked straight ahead as we pulled out of the driveway, never turning around for one last look. How traumatic and sad this must have been.

Our family decided to make this whole experience as happy and pleasant as possible. Time passed, everyone settled in and adjusted to the changes of having an extra person in the household, and all

seemed well. Sometime later, however, our world took a decided turn when Anne was diagnosed with Alzheimer's. I don't think she ever realized what was happening. At that point we began saying our goodbyes. We soon realized that although the body may not change, the mind and personality do. My aunt would never again be the same special person I had once known. Our family went from being friends and loved ones to caregivers.

IF WE HADN'T BEEN ABLE TO LAUGH, I don't know how we would have made it taking care of Anne over the next few years.

Though we did not ridicule or make fun of my aunt or her circumstances, life demanded that we take each occurrence and view it in a somewhat different light.

Anne wanted to help and feel she was making a contribution in the household. She really enjoyed folding laundry. Bear in mind, she was in her nineties and moved rather slowly. We would place the laundry on a bed. She would pull up a chair, put on a baseball cap backwards, and sit for hours slowly and methodically folding each piece. A tremendous help for us, this made her happy.

The difficult part came when she insisted on putting laundry away. No matter how many times we suggested that she let us do this, she would forget and do it anyway.

My daughter or I would have to lure her away from her room so the other could go in and search for clothes and bed linens. She hid things in the oddest places.

Sitting with her in a doctor's office or in church, she would often lean over and make some awkward comment about a person sitting next to her or across the room. She didn't hear well, so her whispers were loud and most times quite embarrassing. What could we do? We just sat there and smiled.

As time passed, her mind began to wander. She could focus only for brief periods of time. We learned to just go along with whatever she said. Before too long, thoughts would pass and she wouldn't remember any of it.

One afternoon, my daughter Kelly called my office in a state of panic. She had arrived home from college to find my aunt planning to get married that very day. Anne wanted her nails painted and needed help getting dressed in her wedding outfit. She announced that our son was flying in to sing at the wedding, and that my husband was going to perform the ceremony. She was marrying her doctor.

Kelly wanted to know what to do. I suggested that she just go along with it, and it would pass. She painted fingernails and helped Anne into her outfit, a mismatched slacks set with bedroom shoes on backwards. Her veil was, as usual, her favorite baseball cap perched

backwards on her head. When I arrived home about an hour and a half later, it had indeed passed. Kelly was exhausted, but Aunt Anne was napping in her room happy and content.

We have pictures of this special day in the life of Anne, and when we look at them now, we remember how much we loved her and what she meant to our lives.

Anne went to be with the Lord at the age of ninety-four. She lived a rich and full life and was a blessing to all who knew her. Just before the funeral attendant closed the casket for the last time, our daughter placed that baseball cap in Anne's hands, then quietly slipped away with a sly grin on her face. Seen only by family, the gesture brought a smile to our hearts. We understood. Those years were sad and happy and trying and rewarding. Yet, we would do it all over again.

Now, ten years later, my mother has come to stay with us.

There truly is a time when the child becomes the parent and the parent becomes the child. Parent care may involve needs and concerns of normal aging, or the added care concerns of an age-related disorder such as dementia or Alzheimer's. Each person is different; each family is different.

Caregiving can be a learning experience—times of sadness and great joy for you and your family.



Ida Lewis is publications editor for FWB Home Missions. She and her husband Ray, Director of FWB Board of Retirement, attend the Donelson FWB Church in Nashville, TN. Their house is presently home to Ida's mother and to Sugar, their beloved dog, and will always be home to grown children Kelly, Chris and daughter-in-law Kelli.

IF YOU FIND YOURSELF THE CAREGIVER OF A LOVED ONE

- 1. First and foremost, look to the Lord for guidance and strength.**
- 2. Make certain your loved one finds a doctor he/she trusts.** You may want to seek the care of an internist with a specialty in geriatrics. For us, this choice in doctor was a tremendous help. He was able to explain the many phases my aunt would experience, what to expect and how we should deal with each change.
- 3. You may need to help organize and administer the loved one's daily medications.**
- 4. Be ready to listen and act when the loved one wants to talk or asks to do something.** If you delay responding, ideas or information may leave the mind and the loved one may not comprehend what you are saying.
- 5. Encourage the person to remain active and "do for themselves" as much as possible.** Let her help around the house with small chores. Take the loved one with you shopping. Provide reading material or crafts. Ask for her help when preparing meals. Supervise if cooking is involved. Your loved one wants to feel useful and not a burden to you, the caregiver.
- 6. Respect the loved one's privacy.** She will be dealing with issues and may enjoy time alone to sort through feelings.
- 7. Answer questions simply and specifically.** Your loved one may not be able to process or remember a long explanation.
- 8. Understand that a loved one, no matter how closely related, will seem and sometimes feel like a visitor living in your home, especially if she has permanently left her own home.**
- 9. Do not neglect your own family while caring for a loved one.** This is difficult but very important advice to follow.
- 10. Remember to laugh.** Laughter will help you feel better and brighten the environment of those in your care. Yes, it's incredibly sad when disease ravages the mind of a loved one. Caregiving is hard work and each moment can be unpredictable, but laughter does help. Laugh in spite of the bad times. Do not feel guilty when the giggle slips out at some funny occurrence. As the mind of your loved one changes, she will do many things that will take you completely by surprise. Go with the flow, as the saying goes. More changes are on the way. When we laugh, the one we're caring for laughs as well.

Be a big girl.

Every little girl wants to be a big girl. But once we've grown up and life becomes stressful, it's easy to revert to little-girl behaviors—pouting, neediness, manipulation, even whining. Half the time, we don't even realize that we're doing it. God, who loves all His girls, never intended us to stay "little." Women who cling to little-girl ways miss out on the joys of being the confident, productive women God intends us to be. In *Big Girls Don't Whine*, author Jan Silvius helps women

- Move beyond the past and on to healthy relationships,
- Choose to be proactive rather than let life just "happen,"
- Discover their full potential,
- And become everything He made them to be.



Big Girls Don't Whine
by Jan Silvius \$13.99
Thomas Nelson Publishing
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A Legacy of Laughter

by Rita Wenning



For February program presentation suggestions see the 2006 Program and Plan Book, pp. 26-30

IN EVERY FAMILY, I suppose, there is someone who becomes the target of certain jokes or funny stories. That person either enjoys the joke with everyone or gets upset and ruins it for everyone. In my family, it might be anyone; however, my mother was usually an easy target because she was so good-hearted and did such funny things.

Like the time she was going to work at 4:30 AM and found a deer lying in the road. (This was years ago, when the deer population was not as large and drivers didn't often find them as road kill.) Thinking that she should not leave it in the road, she decided to put it in the back of her pickup truck. She couldn't get it up into the back of the vehicle, so she drug the poor animal over to the passenger side of the truck, and with the help of the old truck's running board, she boosted it up into the seat. Off she went to work in our little town with a four-legged passenger leaning against the side window with two front legs resting on the dash.

This tale has been told many times over and still gives lots of fun. In later years Mom laughed about it and about US laughing AT her! Mother could laugh easily, but she was especially good at laughing at herself. She brought joy with her everywhere she went. My mother had a merry heart.

What is a Merry Heart?

Merry is a word synonymous with "laughing, cheerful, full of fun, and joyful." Heart is the part of us that feels, loves, hates, and desires, shows kindness, sympathy and forgiveness. A merry heart, therefore, is one that feels cheerful, full of fun, has joy at its center and can laugh at self and with others.

One of my earliest memories as a little girl was going to sleep in church with my head in my mother's lap, only to be awakened with my head bobbing up and down in rhythm to her laughter. I knew church was over, but I didn't dare move. I loved feeling the closeness to my mother and enjoying the joy she shared with others in her conversations. Plus, it made me want to giggle when my head was bouncing up and down.

Laughter has always been a part of my life. Sorrow has been a part of it, as has disappointment, dis-

couragement, exhaustion, fear, grief, worry, embarrassment, pride, gladness, love, thankfulness, want, hope, joy, frustration, and the list goes on. All of our experiences have made us who and what we are today. Our reaction to them is revealed in our attitude and outlook on life.

A merry heart comes from the heart that knows the Lord of our Salvation. Psalm 144:15b says, "*Happy (blessed) is that people, whose God is the Lord.*" It is hard to sing praises when our hearts are heavy or bowed down, but the Psalmist also says that if our hearts are fixed (steadfast) *then* we can make music and praise Him. Notice he does not say what the circumstances may be, so we must believe that this is in *every* circumstance. Often it is the circumstance which builds and strengthens a merry heart (Psalm 57:7). When we praise the Lord in circumstances not of our own choosing, we sacrifice our right to pout and moan about them. We give to God the honor of choosing what we should go through "for our good."

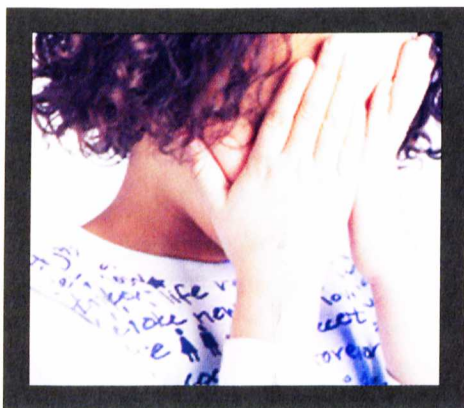
Does this mean that a person without Christ as Savior cannot be happy? Unsaved people can laugh, have fun, encounter joy, and endure all the emotions of believers, but the real, lasting peace that come when deep sorrow or crisis arises, cannot continue to abide in them. Their hearts cannot experience the joyful benefits which the child of God can find in his unswerving, committed heart (Psalm 16:7-11).

We grew older. She married young and had three sons. After almost 20 years of marriage, her husband committed suicide. The years following were not easy for Margie. Her church family became her support group, holding her up during the stressful years of raising her sons and praying them through hard situations.

The joy and hope she found in her relationship with God, and the support of her friends and family have kept her from being a bitter woman. In her 50's now, she is content with her place in life. She will never understand all the ways of her path through life, but she has walked in them and come through with a merry heart. In Psalm 9, (for the director of music, to the tune of "The Death of the Son,") David begins by saying, "*I will praise thee, O LORD, with my whole heart; I will show forth all thy marvelous works. I will be glad and rejoice in thee: I will sing praise to thy name, O thou most High*" (Psalm 9:1-2).

In the late 80's, Margie and I spent the night together for the first time in many years. The next morning my dad asked us if we had giggled all night long; we

**We need a
merry heart
because
life
happens.**



Why Do We Need a Merry Heart?

We need a merry heart because *life* happens. I have a cousin who is very special to me. She grew up in a large city, and from the time she was five or six, she came to visit us on our farm. She has always said those times "down south" were the highlights of her childhood. One night when we were in our teens, we decided we wanted to camp out. May I just shorten this little story to tell you that our camping adventure included a stomping bull, a barbed wire fence, and a sudden evacuation in the middle of the night? It was one of the funniest things we ever did.

told him we had not. He asked us what happened, and I will always remember her answer. She said, "Life happened!" The truth is that life does happen to us all. Not always in the same circumstances, but trouble and tragedy will come if we live long enough. False hope is worse than no hope at all. The secret is in knowing the Hope we have is secure. (Psalm 16:8-10)

We need a merry heart every day because of the little things and big that bring us to our knees. We must exercise the joy, hope, and praise that make our hearts merry so that we may influence others as well as strengthen ourselves. "*A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance...*" (Proverbs 15:13a).

How Can We Develop a Merry Heart?

Many times I don't feel cheerful, but here are some things that help me maintain a merry heart.

Cultivate your relationship with God. The ultimate resource of a merry heart is a personal relationship with the Lord. Proverbs 16:20b says, "...whoso trusteth in the Lord, happy [blessed] is he." Life can bring so many things that tend to dampen our spirits or even depress us. We must do those things that will encourage our hearts. Without question, staying in the Word and continuing to deepen our prayer life with God will lighten our load. Psalm 119:105, says, "Thy word is a lamp unto my feet, and a light unto my path."

Look for the fun in situations that are not life threatening. Sometimes we have to look for the funny because it doesn't appear naturally. One night last winter I was keeping my three granddaughters (three-year old twins and a 17-month-old toddler). Though I had been watching them from the end of the hallway, they disappeared for a few minutes into their room.

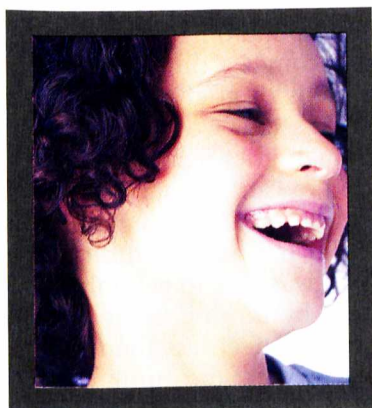
Suddenly, Lauren came running out and said, "No, Mama, don't come!" That was a dead give-away that I should come. Out came Abby the toddler covered with baby powder from head to toe. Everything was powder-white except her eyes and that was just the beginning of the mess. I had a choice—get upset, or get busy.

Visualize. I was super exhausted from a long day with middle school students who at that time of year wanted to be anywhere but in school. I had fought traffic for 45 minutes just to get home. My heart and body did not feel like being merry, to say the least. That's the night my sister called.

She told me that she and her husband had gone to their son's baseball game and were waiting for him in the dugout. He was doing whatever baseball coaches do after a game, so they decided that they would just walk up to him. However, as soon as they started walking near the edge of the field, someone turned off the stadium lights leaving them in the dark. One of the players had left a bat bag lying in their path, and of course, she tripped on it. You can guess the rest of the story. She pulled her husband down with her. There they were, stumbling in the dark and the dirt.

They were rescued, but I must confess I did not wait until I knew they were not hurt before I laughed so hard—she could hardly finish the story. I was visualizing, seeing it all in my mind.

Medical research affirms that when we laugh, endorphins are released into the brain.



I gave them the "grandmother fuss" and then we began to clean up. First, Abby, then the Barbie mobile with its two-inch layer of baby powder, and finally the carpet. All the while, I was suppressing my laughter at the sight and at Abby's happiness in being the center of attention.

If we choose to see the fun in such events, we will cultivate a merry heart. After we correct our children and grandchildren, may we look for the joy. Let's not take ourselves so seriously that everything lies heavily on our heart. Find something in each situation that will make a heart merry—even if it is after the fact.

We spent several minutes on the phone just laughing with each other. When we hung up, I was amazed at how much better I felt. I was not quite so tired; I was smiling and wanting to tell someone else her story.

My husband was in bed, my daughter could not be reached by phone, but I could not wait to get to my computer to share this story with some chosen sisters with whom I "talk" every day. Guess what? They laughed with me.

Medical research affirms that when we laugh, endorphins are released into the brain. Endorphins fight depression. This proves interesting since one in every



four women in America suffer from depression at some time in their lives. These depression fighting endorphins are also produced by exercise and (Guess what else?) chocolate, the food of the gods. Yet, it did not take modern science to reveal this. Nearly 1000 years ago, the writer of Proverbs proclaimed, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (17:22a).

Surround yourself with positive people. Too bad we can't keep all the people we love and laugh with around us all the time. Thankfully, in this age of Internet and email, we almost can. The most wonderful thing that has happened to me in the past few years has been the reconnection with wonderful friends from Bible College days. We write daily, chat when we can and send urgent prayer requests and praise items from Tennessee to France to Oklahoma and back. Distance does not matter. We surround each other with the promise of 9-1-1 prayer and care for each other. This makes for merry, contented hearts.

Study a Biblical blueprint. Finally, we must not fail to look at the blueprint that Christ himself gave in Matthew 5:1-23. We know them as the Beatitudes.

**A merry heart
dedicated to
God will survive.**

Scholars tell us that blessed and happy may be translated the same. So when we read "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven....," read it "Happy

are the poor in spirit" and see how many ways Jesus states we can have a merry heart.

Do you mourn? Are you meek? Do you hunger and thirst after righteousness? Are you merciful? Do you seek to be pure in heart? Are you a peacemaker? Are you persecuted for righteousness sake? Are you passed over in the workplace because you are deemed too religious? Are you talked about, or falsely accused because of your faith in Him? According to His Word, you should be happy and be a possessor of a merry heart.

In the context of these principles, Matthew 7:24-26 tells of the wise builder who built his house on the

rock solid foundation. Many times our joy arises out of our faithfulness to make wise choices or to forgive someone we have hurt. We have all, no doubt, experienced some very unhappy times in our lives resulting from unwise decisions. Often, we can achieve a merry heart by simply acting upon what we believe is God's direction in our lives.

How Does A Merry Heart Survive?

The merry heart will always be within us somewhere. It may be challenged by *disappointments*—in careers, children, failure to reach our goals; *discouraging times*—of sickness, embarrassment, or financial failure; and by *loss*—of spouse, friends, children and other loved ones to death or denial; divorce or separation; loss of job, health, or reputation.

Whatever the loss, there comes a time of grieving. We pass through all the steps of grief whether for a death or for a heartache that seems worse than death. Often a person going through grief feels abandoned, but a merry heart dedicated to God *will* survive.

My daughter recently asked me how I remained so positive all the time...or did I? I had to admit that I did not. But I told her that I was able to get unhealthy thoughts out of my system by turning them over to God. When I do get upset and feel less than happy, I turn to friends who pray with me until the joy returns.

It is not healthy to go around bemoaning our plight in life. Life does not always seem fair. We may not know if a situation comes our way for our own benefit or for someone else's. But God knows what is needed in every circumstance and for whom the situation is intended and designed (Romans 8:28).

Can We Pass it On?

Oh, I think so. One Sunday in the spring of 1989, not long before my mother died suddenly of a heart attack, we were all gathered around the dining room table. As usual, we were laughing at something mother had done. She said in her own joking manner, "If



you are laughing at me, you are letting someone else rest, but who are you going to laugh at when I am gone?" We quickly asked what made her think we would stop laughing at her then?

Mother did so many things that made our hearts merry—too many to tell. She passed on to her children that same desire to see joy and laughter in life. We do that by laughing at ourselves.

After nearly 40 years of marriage, I have come to believe it's important to pass on to our children the ability to laugh and be cheerful. Long before I had any children, I earned an early chance. We had only been married a few months. At the close of a very serious business meeting in my husband's home church, the pastor admonished everyone that the topic of the meeting should not be a matter of tomorrow's telephone conversations. It was quite a somber moment.

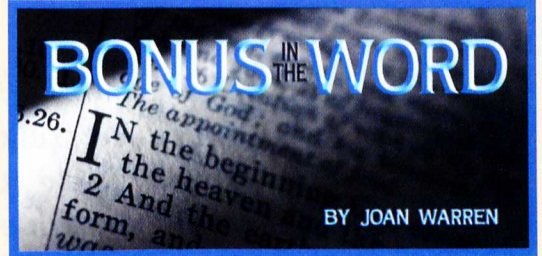
Near the middle of the church, on the center aisle of a pew, I stood listening, balancing myself on one foot, swinging the other one behind it. Suddenly, I lost my balance and fell out into the center aisle of the church.

Oh, how humiliating that was. Fortunately, our pastor had both a sense of humor and one of the merriest hearts I know. He said that since I was laughing, he guessed it was all right if they did.

I thought, then, that nothing could be more embarrassing in my life and I determined I would never take myself too seriously. The Lord has blessed me, enabling me to enjoy a merry heart through many heartaches and difficulties, just as he will (or already has) you.

Should we go around smiling and laughing all the time? We probably cannot. But we need the spirit of a merry heart to carry us through those days when the world weighs heavily on us. Christ's desire for us is to find our life in Him a cheerful experience.

As women of destiny, we should pass on to our family and friends a legacy of true spirituality of which a merry heart is an integral part.



It's not too late to make those resolutions for 2006. Here are a few suggestions the Bible recommends. Summarize what God says in each Scripture.

1. I Will Worship God

- A. Exodus 20:3
- B. Luke 10:27
- C. Luke 16:13
- D. Hebrews 10:25

2. I Will Be a True Disciple

- A. Matthew 16:24
- B. Luke 14:26
- C. John 8:32
- D. John 15:8

3. I Will Be a Witness

- A. Psalm 96:3
- B. Matthew 28:19
- C. Deuteronomy 32:46
- D. Psalm 26:7

4. I Will Minister to Others

- A. James 1:27
- B. Galatians 6:2
- C. James 2:15, 16
- D. Colossians 3:23, 24

5. I Will Fellowship with Other Christians

- A. 1 John 1:7
- B. Colossians 3:15, 16
- C. Psalm 133:1
- D. 1 Peter 3:8

Joan Warren is a Bible teacher and WAC leader from Oilton, OK

Rita Wenning lives in Nashville, TN where she teaches sixth grade at H.G. Hill Middle School. Married and mother of three, Rita enjoys reading, music, the outdoor beauties of nature and spending time with her seven grandchildren. She is a member of Woodbine FWB Church. Her favorite verse among many is Romans 8:28, where she's returned and found comfort many times in her life.



No one likes to talk about it. Some pretend it doesn't exist. It can hide behind smiling faces and picture-perfect families. At times it strikes unsuspecting victims. It can show up after Christmas, after mountaintop experiences, or it can appear out of the blue.

DEPRESSION. Doctors say that 20% of all women and 10% of all men will suffer depression some time in their lives. Even though the percentages are sizeable—almost overwhelming—depression is an issue that most churches and Christians don't address. Why are we, the church, here? Should part of our ministry be aimed at helping depressed people? What do we do when depression strikes our family or when we find ourselves in that 20 percent?

THE BIBLE says a lot about depression. In 1 Kings 19:1-18, we see its classic signs in the life of Elijah. What amazes me is how well his symptoms fit into the current checklist doctors use to diagnose depression. The Bible even serves as a medical manual. These signs make me think that Elijah truly experienced depression and not just burnout.

HIGH TO LOWS

In 1 Kings 18, we can look back and see Elijah's "Christmas"—his mountaintop experience. God won the championship on Mt. Carmel. False prophets were slain and the people now worshiped the Lord. But just as suddenly as God sent fire, Jezebel sent a threat: Elijah would be dead in 24 hours. Elijah, on the heels of a high in which he actually outran Ahab's chariot (with God's help, of course) was now thrown into a deep dark depression.

ISOLATION

The first thing he did—and what many depressed people do—was to isolate himself (1 Kings 19:3-4). He left town and ran out into the desert. He even left his servant, something completely inconvenient. This natural tendency to isolate is one of the worst things a severely depressed person can do. It hides her symptoms from family and friends, making it harder to get help.

DESIRE TO DIE

The next symptom? Elijah wanted to die (v. 4). He went out into the desert without food. He may have even been suicidal. We all possess an inborn desire to live. But, for someone who is severely depressed, this desire may be obscured. She may even want to die. This is why isolation is so dangerous for the depressed. If you are a friend or relative looking on, you may need to keep a close watch or get the individual the help she needs.

IRREGULAR PATTERNS

Verses five and six reveal that Elijah slept and God took care of him—nourishing him with a special cake. I wonder what that cake contained. A depressed person may have trouble with sleeping and eating patterns. Like Elijah, she may sleep all the time, or she may not be able to sleep at all. She may overeat, or she may completely lose her appetite.

CLOUDED THINKING

Next, Elijah's mind was foggy. In verse 10, he bemoaned that he was the only prophet left. Yet, 1 Kings 18:13 records that Obadiah told Elijah that 100 prophets' lives had been spared. Did he forget in so little time? Did he lie? I don't think he would have lied to God, seeing who Elijah was and who God is. My husband Dave contends that Elijah's "depression was speaking."

Hiding out with Elijah

by Becky Franks

and I think this is the best way to interpret it. You may be doing all you can for someone who is depressed. Yet, she may look at you and say, "No one cares about me." Doesn't she realize that you love her? Probably—somewhere in the back of her mind. But her feelings are saying that no one cares. Feelings are overwhelming in the depressed individual and sometimes these feelings speak out and hurt the ones closest to her.

GENTLE TREATMENT

What did God do? God did not rebuke Elijah; He was gentle with him. God could have appeared in the wind, the earthquake or the fire, but, instead He chose a still small voice (v. 12). In the past, God had come as a fire and in other dramatic ways, but now for Elijah, He came in that still small voice.

God did clear Elijah's thinking. Truth has to prevail. And when Elijah was better, could God still use a broken prophet? Yes, He could and He did. What an encouragement for us. We all are broken vessels.

MY STORY

How can I know this? I've been there. I've hidden out with Elijah. Depression became a reality to me eight years ago. November 14, 1996 was one of the best days of my life. My third child was born, a healthy baby girl. But the days following were different from those after the births of my other children.

WARNING SIGNS

The first sign evidenced with my lack of energy. A month after she was born, we took a family vacation to Orlando. We had planned this trip for over a year, even before I got pregnant, so we were really excited. Yet, when we got there, I stayed in the hotel most of the time. I excused myself by saying it was different having a baby in my 30's than in my 20's.

I didn't get better with time; I got worse. Dave went to the Northern

Alabama State Missions Conference in January. During most of February he was away, participating in another conference. Since the kids were in school, I stayed home.

Normally, I liked to go shopping and out to eat with Mom and my friends. However, during this time, I even refused to get out for the things I'd enjoyed before. I isolated myself.

When I was with my parents, I was very cruel—blaming them for all kind of things in my childhood, some things that didn't even happen. I was very introspective—delving into my past, trying to figure out what was wrong with me.

I felt guilt—some real and some false. I confessed everything imaginable. I confessed to Dave all kinds of sins from my thought life. Can you Imagine confessing all the things that you can remember you've ever done or thought, even to your husband. . .

All this introspection destroyed my chances for sleep. I was awake almost all nights. Sometimes I

would fall asleep momentarily in the day, but most nights I was up and down. They say that two nights without sleep can be compared to a dose of LSD to your brain.

Somewhere in that time, I'm not exactly sure when, my children—all three of them—came down with chicken pox. My mind was not functioning well enough for me to realize that: A. They had chicken pox; B. They would eventually get better; C. Therefore, this is temporary. Rather, I saw the sores and thought I must be an awful mother.

RECOGNIZING A PROBLEM

I did not realize there was a problem until one Wednesday night. I was still in my pajamas. Dave told me many times to go get dressed for church. I couldn't. I'd walk to the bedroom each time, but I would get distracted and end up sitting in a daze. Finally, Dave took the children to prayer meeting, frustrated with me for not being able to do something as simple as getting

DEPRESSION CHECKLIST

DANGER SIGNS FOR DEPRESSION

- ☐ 1. Too much or too little sleep
- ☐ 2. Loss of interest in life
- ☐ 3. Overwhelming guilt
- ☐ 4. Low energy
- ☐ 5. Inability to concentrate
- ☐ 6. Loss of appetite or overeating
- ☐ 7. Slow reflexes or sluggishness
- ☐ 8. Suicidal thoughts
- ☐ 9. Inability to experience pleasure

IF FIVE OR MORE APPLY
FOR MORE THAN TWO WEEKS,
THE PERSON IS DIAGNOSED
AS BEING CLINICALLY DEPRESSED.

(DSM-IV)



dressed. I sat on the bed confused. I knew something was wrong, but I didn't know what. I had no idea what to do. I just knew that the situation felt hopeless. There was no way out.

You have to understand. I'd been in church my whole life—even gone to Bible College. Maybe I just deleted it from my brain as something that didn't concern me, but up to that time I don't recall *ever* hearing a sermon about depression. Burnout—yes. Missionary culture shock—definitely. But, true depression—no. No checklists in the churches. No pamphlets.

POSSIBILITIES

I thought maybe something was wrong with my brain. (I'd had brain surgery a couple years before.) The next morning I called the neurosurgeon's office and talked with his nurse. After asking me a few questions, she realized that something was badly wrong. She made me promise to call my ob/gyn.

About eight months earlier, in my doctor's office I had read a pamphlet about post-partum blues. I had no idea that post-partum depression could strike as late as three to four months after a child was born. I thought the call was a waste of time.

WATCH AND PRAY

I talked with the doctor over the phone. He mentioned antidepressants, but said that I couldn't take them and nurse my baby. I wouldn't consider it. He suggested that I read my Bible and pray. He scheduled me for a visit in two weeks.

He hadn't realized that I needed help right away. I wasn't functioning. I was spending all day in my pajamas. I couldn't remember things such as eating. Taking care of the kids and getting dressed were

impossible tasks. If he had asked me to come in that day, he would have seen immediately, just by the way I looked, that this was critical. But, he didn't.

Since he told me to read the Bible and pray, I took it that he felt I wasn't spiritual enough. I started reading the Bible all the time. Though depression can be caused by sin and guilt, not all depression is that way. False guilt had such a hold on me that I even felt guilty for things like wearing bright clothes.

NEW LIFE

Dave realized that I needed help immediately, and he didn't give up. With assistance from International Missions, he was able to get me into a New Life Clinic—a Christian clinic started by Paul Meier who co-authored the book *Happiness is a Choice*. There I received the help I needed to begin the journey back to health.

WHERE WAS GOD?

Where was God? I had been a Christian since I was five years old. At this point, when I really needed Him, where was He?

He did not prevent me from suffering depression just because I was a Christian. He did not heal me miraculously, even though I begged and pleaded.

So where was God? After all these years, I've come to see the ways He blessed me through the depression.

1. I was blessed with treatment. I feel it was the best treatment I could have received.

2. I was blessed with a husband who patiently stayed with me and waited for me to get better.

3. I was blessed in that God changed me through depression. He has made me a better consoler. As I was coming out of the depres-

**KNOW
THAT
YOU ARE
NOT THE
ONLY ONE.
OTHERS ARE
OUT THERE
STRUGGLING
JUST LIKE
YOU..**



sion, one Sunday night, my pastor preached on 2 Corinthians 1:4: *"Who [God] comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God."* It was one of those moments when I felt as if the pastor was pointing right at me. I was probably oblivious to the pastor, but God was speaking to me.

I had been feeling that my life was over. How could I ever help anyone again after what I'd gone through? God made me realize that I could help others because I had gone through it, and I knew the strength that I could draw on from Him.

WHAT IF I'M DEPRESSED?

Maybe my symptoms sound familiar, or the checklist on the previous page reminds you of yourself. You may ask, "What do I do if I'm depressed?"

Do not isolate yourself. If you are down, share your feelings with a friend. Many times talking it out makes you feel better. And if it can't be talked out, maybe your friend needs to be there to monitor you.

Do read your Bible and pray. The Bible is full of passages that are comforting and encouraging. For example, the Psalms—Psalm 13, Psalm 23, and so many oth-

WHERE WAS GOD? HE DID NOT PREVENT ME FROM SUFFERING DEPRESSION JUST BECAUSE I WAS A CHRISTIAN. HE DID NOT HEAL ME MIRACULOUSLY, EVEN THOUGH I BEGGED AND PLEADED.



ers—are filled with songs to uplift us. The Book of Philippians talks about rejoicing. Consider a character study on the life of David, Joseph, or Elijah. When you are finished, share your findings with someone—a Christian friend, your pastor's wife, or maybe even someone who is depressed.

Watch your eating and sleeping patterns. Don't keep these a secret from your family and loved ones. They are key signs that your depression may be severe.

If it's not just the blues, get Christian help. That help could be your pastor or his wife, a Christian doctor, or a Christian counselor.

Don't give up if you are not receiving the help you need. Keep trying. Sometimes good Christian people can give wrong advice. Even Christian doctors can make mistakes.

HELP FOR OTHERS

You may say, "My friend or relative is depressed; what should I do?"

For starters, don't give her meaningless cliches or easy answers. If you don't know what to say, try listening.

Love her through her troubles.

A friend of mine used to say, "It is hard to hug a porcupine. But who needs a hug more than a porcupine?" I was like a porcupine when I was depressed. I didn't want to be around people. Those who got closest to me got stabbed. We may have to love a depressed per-

son through her troubles. This may include forcing ourselves into her isolation zone.

Suggest she read the Scriptures. Remember that she is already hurting. Offer encouraging selections from the Psalms and Phillipians, or the stories of David, Joseph, or Elijah. Talk to her about the passages she's read. What is her perception? Is she thinking clearly?

Watch her eating and sleeping patterns. She might not even be aware of them.

If you sense that she's feeling more than just blues, get Christian help. Encourage her to see a pastor, Christian doctor, Christian counselor or contact one of the agencies listed on this page.

Don't give up on finding help. It's out there; just keep looking.

ABOUT THIS ARTICLE

Why did God lead me to share this? For the last eight years, I've been ashamed, trying to forget it all happened. But, recently I heard about a pastor's wife—a dear, Christian lady—who was going through a bout with depression very similar to mine. You probably know someone (maybe an unsaved friend) who has or will suffer depression. We are everywhere!

Before I could share, I knew I needed to talk to Celeste, my eight-year-old daughter. It's her story, too. After talking together, I asked her permission to write this article. She asked, "Is it kind of like witnessing?" I explained that it was like that, only to people who are very, very sad—so they can get better. She said, "If that's what God wants, then I want it, too."

That goes for me, as well. If you are severely depressed, I pray you will get the help you need. Know that you are not the only one. Others are out there struggling just like you.

If you know a friend or relative who is depressed, I pray this helps you find the understanding and compassion you need daily to guide them back to health.

FIND **HELP** FOR **DEPRESSION**

www.troubledwith.com

(This Focus on the Family website provides information, articles, resources and opportunities for individual counseling concerning various life crises and difficulties.)

Focus on the Family Ministries
Colorado Springs, CO 80995
1-800-232-6459

RAPHA

www.rapha.info/index.html

1-800-383-HOPE

(This Christ-centered treatment program integrates quality medical and clinical care with biblically based therapy. Rapha ministers to Christians suffering from emotional problems or substance.)

RAPHA Ministries
3021 Gateway Drive Suite 290
Irving, TX 75063

New Life Ministries

www.newlife.com

1-800-NEW-LIFE

(America's largest, faith-based counseling organization, New Life treats depression, food disorders, addictions, marriage difficulty, anxiety, and more.)

New Life Ministries
P.O. Box 1018
Laguna Beach, CA 92652

Link Care

www.linkcare.org

1-559-439-2647

(Link Care's 40 year mission has been to provide counseling and care specifically for pastors, missionaries and their families.)

Link Care
1734 W. Shaw Ave
Fresno CA 93711-3416

Becky Franks lives in Madison, AL, and attends the Madison FWB Church where she teaches K-4 and K-5. She and her husband Dave served 10 years with FWBIM as missionaries to Uruguay. The Franks have three children—Beth, Nathan, and Celeste—whom they consider their first ministry.



SPRINGBOARD

LEADERSHIP

UTILIZE. The 2006 Program and Plan Book (PPB) offers help with program presentations and gives monthly ideas for leaders and chairmen. Check out this vital resource.

PARTICIPATE. Encourage your prayer chairman or other pray-ers in your group to attend the 2006 Prayer Summit. It will change the way they view the world. Call 1-877-767-7736 for registration information.

INCREASE. Individual WNAC membership fees are now \$15 (2005 Convention resolution). This is the national fee. Individual district or state fees may vary. Please contact your treasurer for an exact amount.

PRESENT. Use the enlistment skit, "Seasons of WAC" as a churchwide WAC promotion (p. 70, PPB) Let Lucy and Marge promote your February meeting.

INSTALL. Do you have an installation for officers? Use the "Set Your Hearts" program (p. 20, PPB) in the 2006 Program and Plan Book. Make a memory in the process.

DOWNLOAD. The January program is available for download (PDF) on the WNAC website. In an effort to assure leaders ample time for planning, the first month's program (Jan., Mar., May, Jul., Sept., Nov.) of each CoLaborer issue will be posted online at least one month prior to your meeting.

OUR WEBSITE

www.nafwb.org/wnac

Contact us:

wnac@nafwb.org

STUDY

PURCHASE a title from the suggested reading list (p. 23) for teens in your church.

CONSIDER using Bonus Word (p. 13.)

READ the review on p. 27. Discuss options/ challenges for girls of dating-age in today's world.

NOTE the checklist for depression (p. 15). Gather Christian resources to share.

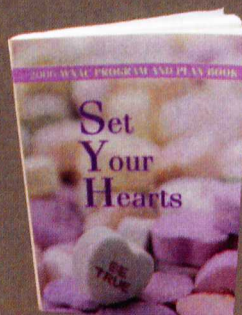
SERVICE

OBSERVE Sanctity of Human Life Sunday, January 22. Plan a diaper shower for a local crisis pregnancy center.

RELIEVE a caregiver in your church or community. Offer to sit with the loved one for an hour or an afternoon.

MAKE or purchase valentines for retirement home or assisted living residents.

NOW AVAILABLE FOR 2006



skits
ideas
promotions
projects
information
installation
emphasis
enlistment

the WNAC Program and Plan Book \$8.00 plus shipping

MISSIONS

SHARE the funny incidents of missionaries from p. 28. Emphasize that missionaries are ordinary people who laugh and cry as you.

UPDATE missionary cards, maps, and directories. Contact FWBHM (1-877-767-7674) or FWBIM (1-877-7567-7736) for materials.

NEED a project? Email: Steve Lytle steve@fwbgo (FWBIM) or Richard Atwood richard@nafwb.org (FWBHM). Or phone them at the toll-free numbers above.

WNAC NEEDS

PROVISION CLOSET. Tupperware canister sets and tumblers (all sizes), full sheet sets and vellux or cotton thermal blankets (all sizes).

WNAC OFFICE. Sufficient finances to cover day to day office expenses.

UPCOMING EVENTS

In an effort to keep you better informed, WNAC is now posting upcoming district, state and area-wide events of interest to women. Email event name/date/location/contact person to wnac@nafwb.org

FEBRUARY: (18) First Arizona WAC District Meeting, First FWB Church, Tuscon

MARCH: (2-3) FWBIM 2006 Prayer Summit Camp Garner Creek, Dickson, TN

(16-18) California WAC Convention, Holiday Inn Express, Solvang

(18) South Carolina WAC State Meeting, First FWB Church, Inman

(16) Georgia WAC State Meeting, Calvary FWB, Columbus

PRAYER

CUT January prayer reminders in the shape of D's. Write the name or post a picture of an MK inside the letter.

GIVE women boxes of conversation hearts, reminding them to daily converse with God.

PRAY for those in your church or community who are suffering from depression or facing difficult trials.

MAKE a list of those in authority (local officials to world leaders) Divide into groups and pray for them by name, concerning their salvation and asking God to allow Christians to find Daniel-like favor in their sight.

LABORS OF LOVE

"We give thanks to God always for you all, making mention of you in our prayers, remembering without ceasing your work of faith, and labour of love, and patience of hope in our Lord Jesus Christ, in the sight of God and our Father:" 1 Thessalonians 1:2,3



PICTURED: (LEFT) Tables honor soldiers and veterans at Gastonia First WAC (NC). Women assemble care packages. (ABOVE) Seffner (FL) women's group encourages missionary Angela Emerick.

● First FWB WAC, Gastonia, NC, honored active military and prior veterans with a special breakfast and program, November 5, 2005. Allen Childers, with the National Guard, and his wife Jenny shared experiences from his tour in Iraq and her work as coordinator with soldiers' families. Iraq veteran Ronnie Radford, played patriotic selections on his trumpet. Tables displayed pictures of current military men and women. After the meal, women assembled 15 care packages of baked goods, candies, gum, personal items, Scripture, and "as much love as [they] could fit into each box."

● "An Apple a Day...to Keep Discouragement Away" served as a recent meeting theme for Seffner FWB women's group, Seffner, FL. Missionary guest Angela Emerick shared her vision for Central Asia. The group presented her with a basket of 365 paper encouragement apples—one for each day of her first year

on the mission field. Each apple contained words of encouragement, Scripture and prayerful thoughts from women in the church. The group also contributed a bag full of supplies for the people in Central Asia.

● Mississippi State Women Active for Christ Convention attendees voted to give \$500 to WNAC's General Fund in memory of WAC pioneer Eva House. In annual session November 4, 2005, the group also adopted the Mediterranean Team in France as a state project for 2006.

Is your group involved in a special project or noteworthy endeavor? Share your

LABORS OF LOVE

SEND NEWS AND PHOTOS:

EMAIL: sarah@nafwb.org

MAIL: P. O. Box 5002
Antioch, TN 37011-5002

Hosting church WAC, Harmony FWB, Eupora, shares this recipe for *Winter Fruit*, served atop sour cream pound cake at the Friday evening banquet.

WINTER FRUIT

- 1 cinnamon stick
- 2 small apples
- 1/3 cup dried cranberry
- 1/2 cup gold raisins
- 1/2 cup dried apricots
- 8 oz pineapple tidbits, undrained
- orange juice
- 1 can peach pie filling

Mix all ingredients in a crock pot. Add enough orange juice to make some juice in the fruit. Simmer for 6 hours. Remove cinnamon stick.

Recipe from House of Memories
Route 1 Box 150
Eupora, Mississippi 39744
662•258•4504
Melinda Lusk or Tina Hester
info@house-of-memories.com

FEEDBACK...FEEDBACK...FEEDBACK

Dear WNAC,

Would it be possible for you to start sending our books at least a week earlier than you have been sending them. We have our meeting the second Wednesday of the month and usually we get our books a few days late.

Marnell Parker
Macedonia WAC, New Edinburg, AR

EDITOR'S NOTE: Due to computer changes and the Central Asia conference, several issues in 2005 were mailed later than usual. We are making every effort to get back on schedule. In an ongoing attempt to help, we are now posting the first month's program of each issue on our website www.nafwb.org/wnac. Leaders can download and print copies should magazines not arrive in time for planning.

Dear WNAC,

We want you to know we truly enjoy *CoLaborer*. It is a blessing to so many. When we finish our books we carry

them to the hospital and nursing home. I am a volunteer so I am twice blessed—myself personally, and hearing those ladies tell me how (the magazines) bless their hearts. Keep up the good work and may God continue to bless you.

Sue Yerby
Fayette, AL

Dear WNAC,

My heart overflows with joy and thankfulness for WNAC taking interest in the work of the Lord among the Ojibwas. The article (NOV/DEC 05) was a fluent representation of our heart and work among these people. It is my prayer the article will burn an image of lost souls, hell bound without Christ. May the fire of the Holy Spirit of God fuel that image into mission works all across America and the world.

G.H. Lemelin and family
Harvest FWB Mission Church, White Earth, MN

CORRECTIONS: Happy Home WAC group mentioned in "Labors of Love" (Nov/Dec 05) is from Andrews, SC, not Ava, MO as listed.

The Projects article, "Just a Little Marble" (Sep/Oct 05) was written by Brenda Smith and submitted by Jackie Bowers rather than by pastor's wife Joyce Bowers. *CoLaborer* regrets both these errors.

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I certify that all information furnished on this form is true and complete. I understand that anyone who furnishes false or misleading information on this form or who omits material or information requested on the form may be subject to criminal sanctions (including fines and imprisonment) and/or civil sanctions (including civil penalties).

Marjorie Workman 11/16/05

2006 WNAC ORDER FORM

BOOKS

QUANTITY:

- DEV01 *Moments for Singles* by Leigh McLeroy. Devotional and inspirational thoughts for all singles. 217 pp./ \$11.99
- DEV02 *Through My Windows* by Dianne Worthington. Devotions from drapery. 80 pp./ \$8.00
- DEV04 *The Power of a Praying Woman* by Stormie Omartian. / \$10.99
- FAM01 *10 Things I Want My Daughter to Know* by Annie Chapman. 177 pp./\$9.99
- FAM02 *15 Minute Organizer* by Emilie Barnes. Helpful hints and time-saving strategies. 320 pp./ \$10.99
- FAM03 *101 Ways to Romance Your Marriage* by Debra White Smith. 223 pp./ \$8.99
- FAM04 *Romancing Your Husband* by Debra White Smith. 223 pp./ \$10.99
- FAM06 *The Power of a Praying Wife* by Stormie Omartian. / \$10.99
- FAM08 *Strong Families in Stressful Times* by John Trent. 10 ways to fill your home with stability and faith. 128 pp./ \$10.99
- MIS01 *Beyond the Gate* Autobiography of Mabel Bailey Willey with Mary R. Wisheart. Hardback 146 pp./ \$19.95
- MIS02 *Mas Alla del Portal* Autobiography of Mabel Bailey Willey with Mary R. Wisheart. Spanish version of *Beyond the Gate*. paperback 169 pp./ \$12.95
- MIS04 *First Fruits: Answered Prayer on the Mission Field* by Lorene Miley. 80 pp./\$5.00
- MIS06 *Inside Afghanistan* by John Weaver. 201 pp./ \$14.99
- MIS08 *Over Mountain or Plain or Sea* Autobiography of F.W.B. Missionary Trula Cronk. 217 pp./ \$12.95
- MIS10 *They Deserve a Second Chance* by Shirley Roberts Combs. Unforgettable story—rescuing Brazil's street children. 127 pp./ \$6.50
- MIS12 *Touching the Untouchables* by Laura Belle Barnard with Georgia B. Hill. 170 pp./ \$4.00
- SB21 *6 Keys to Lasting Friendship* Women's Bible study by Carol Kent and Karen Lee-Thorp. 76 pp./ \$6.00
- SB23 *Getting Off the Emotional Roller Coaster* by Bob Phillips. 240 pp./ \$10.99
- SB25 *Lies Women Believe* by Nancy Leigh DeMoss. 284 pp./ \$13.99
- SB27 *Sparks Into Flame: A History of WNAAC from 1935—1985* by Mary Wisheart. 154 pp./\$4.00
- SB29 *When I Lay Down My Isaac* by Carol Kent. Unshakable faith in unthinkable circumstances. Hardback/ \$18.99

HELPS

- EN01 *Enlistment Ideas*. Guide for increasing participation among F.W.B. women. \$1.50
- MN02 *Manual for Free Will Baptist Women's Organizations*. Guidebook for organizing and operating women's groups. \$12.00
- PP06 *2006 Program and Plan Book*. A must for WNAAC officers. Includes calendar of events, program suggestions, WNAAC goals, plan sheets, and other helpful information. \$8.00
- RR04 *Parliamentary Procedures*. Guide for conducting business properly and quickly. \$2.00
- CA01 *Set Your Hearts Gift Notes*. 12 cards w/envelopes. Three designs. Blank inside. \$8.00
- (please select style) _____ **Classic (golds)** or _____ **Bold (reds)**
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- CA03 *Gift Notes*. 5 mini-cards w/envelopes. Assorted styles for gift giving. Blank inside. \$2.00

MAGAZINE

MAG01 *CoLaborer*. One-year subscription. Six issues. \$12.00

FORMS

- RB01 *Secretary's Record & Report Book*. Space for membership roll and minutes. \$1.50
- RB02 *Treasurer's Record & Report Book*. Space for year's receipts/disbursements \$1.50
- RF01 *Local Treasurer's Report Forms*. 12/\$1.50
- RR02 *District Treasurer's Report Forms*. 12/\$1.50
- RR03 *State Treasurer's Report Forms*. 12/\$1.50
- Annual Report Blanks* (free)
- _____ LOCAL _____ DISTRICT _____ STATE

PLAYS

- PB10 *A Piece that Fits* \$3.00
- PB11 *Fresh Air* \$3.00
- PB12 *God's Bouquet* \$4.00
- PB13 *Mother's Day Medley* \$3.00

FREE MATERIALS

- PM25 *WNAAC Quarter Folders*
- PMEN *Women Like You* enlistment brochure
- PMBK *WNAAC Ministries* booklet. Everything you need to know about WNAAC
- PMHM *Home Missions Directory*
- PMIM *International Missions Directory*

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DEBE'S DELIGHTS

Debe Taylor
WNAC President

*"thy commandments
are my delights."
Psalm 119:143b*

Leftovers Again?

No heavy sigh, no horrible face, no scrunched-up nose, not even any rude comment, but there is a slight look of disdain whenever I serve leftovers. My husband, David, has never been fond of true leftovers. You know the kind I mean—where you make something really out of nothing. He has often been amazed (or possibly repulsed) at some of my concoctions.

Now he will be the first to tell you that spaghetti, chili and homemade soup are all better the second time around, but that is the extent of his list. When I do happen to serve leftovers, which is not very often, he does accept his supper and eats it quietly. But you know what? He really prefers my fried chicken, roast beef with the fixins or turkey and dressing. In other words, he likes when I present my best.

God prefers my best, too. Oh, He takes my leftovers because sometimes that is all He can get from me.

How often I give numerous hours to my family, job and several other activities and then expect God to be content with an hour here and an hour there? When I

do give Him the leftover time, my attention doesn't always come with it. I am busy creating a mental list of everything else I need to get accomplished. Wonder, will I ever learn that giving God priority with my time really does make the remaining time stretch further?

I expend all energies and efforts to help a family member or friend in need, but asked to use my abilities and talents for the Lord most often catches me grumbling. Making excuses for why I didn't give my all doesn't impress the Lord and doesn't ease my conscience. News flash! All my abilities and skills are gifts from the Lord. So why do I give Him leftovers more times than giving my best!

Then, there is the matter of money. Don't get me wrong—I'm no Rockefeller. But I do usually have money for whatever I *want* to buy. Yet I call it a sacrifice when I'm asked to give for missionary endeavors or church benevolent causes? Oops! I'm serving God the leftovers again.

He who gave the best for me surely deserves my best. I have to go—it's time to discard the leftovers.



Diane Thomas Bridgman

Reader, it is a privilege to tell you my story in the space of this guest column. I want to start at the beginning because it shaped so much of who I am.

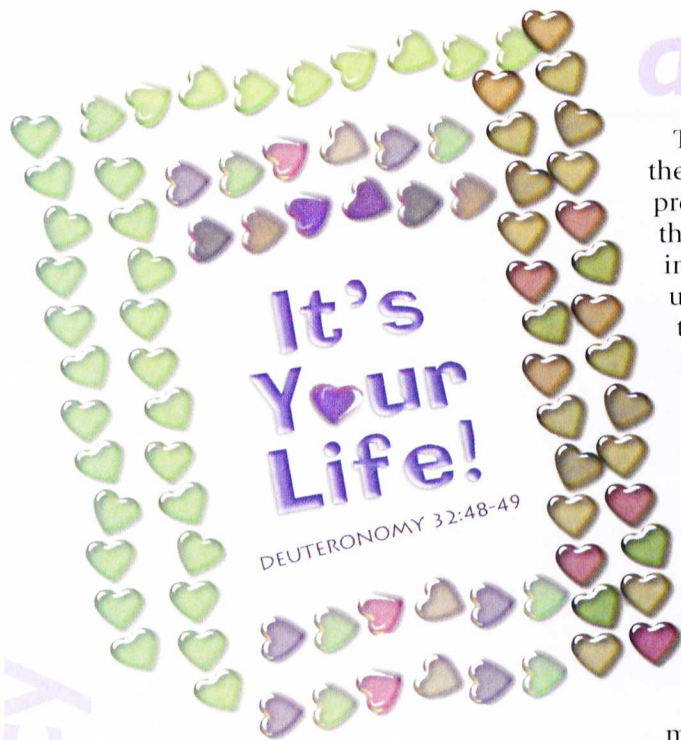
Childhood was not a safe place for me and I have few good memories of it. I rarely venture back for the fond ones because I always run into the pain. My earliest memories are of abuse, but I can sit here today and tell you with all honesty that I would not change it. It was in that pain and anger that I looked at God. I questioned Him. I cried out to Him. I pointed my finger on phrases in His Word and tested Him to prove it. "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble" (Psalms 46:1). "I am in trouble, God. Help me," my teenage heart pled with him and He did. He always did.

I will carry the scars of those years to my grave but they are no longer open wounds. They have been healed and I can touch them. Forgiveness is complete and I would not change my childhood.

Reader, does that surprise you? My relationship with God would not be what it is if I changed one aspect of my childhood. That time in my life brought me to a crossroad of choice. I could remain bitter or I could give my hand to God and trust Him. I extended my hand and His promises came alive and He has a promise for every situation I face.

Reader, I don't understand so many things in my life but I don't question God anymore because I know I can trust Him. I just give Him my hand and set my heart on Him.

Diane is a writer and speaker to Christian women who earns her keep as an administrator at Evergreen Memorial. She loves her WAC through the Grifton FWB Church in North Carolina. She is "happily ever after" married to Richard.



abstinence std's

The United States has the highest rates of teen pregnancy and births in the western world. Eight in ten pregnancies are unintended and 81% are to teens. Teen mothers are less likely to complete high school and more likely to end up on welfare. Children of teen mothers are more likely to have lower birth weights, perform poorly in school and are of greater risk of abuse and neglect. Sons of teen mothers are more likely to end up in

prison. Daughters of teen mothers are 22% more likely to become teen mothers themselves.

Birth control is not the answer to teen pregnancy. Even with the use of the Pill or the Patch, many women still get pregnant. Too many young women on birth control have heard, "Congratulations! You are eight weeks pregnant." They put their faith in birth control yet fail to use it correctly. Some use it exactly right, only to still get pregnant.

Too many teens have been the victims of the safe sex message. Condoms are not 100% effective even with accurate use. Many married adults don't use them correctly. The Centers For Disease Control has revised their support of condoms and now state that condoms cannot guarantee absolute protection from any disease.

America is facing an epidemic of sexually transmitted diseases. The State of the Nation 2005 report predicts that one in two sexually active youth will contract a STD by age 25. One half of all HIV infections occur among adolescents. Other studies report that one third of our population is infected with genital herpes. Chlamydia is most prevalent among persons ages 15-24.

Then there is the issue of abortion. Every day in the United States

alone nearly 4,000 women choose abortion. That's over 45 million abortions since the notorious Roe vs. Wade ruling. Many seek abortion because they are scared and feel they have no other choice. They are trying to protect themselves but fail to protect the unborn. They will not consider adoption believing it is more painful than abortion.

Abortion causes two wounds. One is never acknowledging your baby or holding it in your arms. The other is the guilt of knowing it was your choice. Post abortive women sit silently in our churches fearing once again the shame if anyone found out. God loves them and wants to heal them and set them free.

Sexual purity is a mandate in God's Word. Why would He give us a human body that responds sexually and tell us to practice purity? He has plans for us, plans of good, hope and promises for our future. The value of purity is greatest when challenged and proven true. It is a gift to be protected and cherished. If you have opened this gift, would you please let Him restore it? He has promised to forgive and cleanse us if we will ask Him.

A young man recently interviewed me for a project he was doing about the effects of premarital sex. He asked one question that stands out in my mind. He wanted to know why teenagers have sex outside of marriage. I thought for a moment and replied that they simply have their wants ahead of their needs. He was silent and then I explained, "Their need is to wait, to be free of out-of-wedlock pregnancy, STD's, abortion and the effects of fear, shame and regret in losing their sexual purity. Their wants are to be loved, accepted, popular and in control."

I then shared with him an example I use with teens. When I am dieting and see the ice cream in the freezer, I know that I don't need it. But I want it. I convince myself that I am in control. One spoonful won't hurt. The next thing I know I've had a bowl of ice cream and blown my diet! It felt good at the time and it satisfied my inner desire for the moment. However, I did not need the guilt or the calories. Teens believe they are in control of the situation and won't go too far. They rationalize they won't get pregnant or be infected with a STD.



Dana Copeland, First FWB, Amory, MS, is director of a Christian crisis pregnancy center. She also teaches abstinence education at local middle schools. WAC program coordinator and ladies Sunday school teacher, Dana enjoys scrapbooking, reading and motorcycle riding with husband Sam on their Honda 1800 VTX Cruiser.

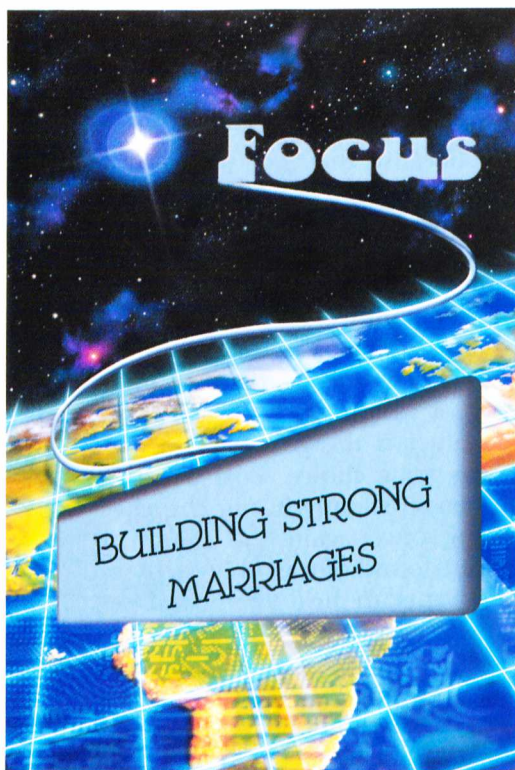
suggested reading

AND THE BRIDE WORE WHITE by Dannah Gresh

LADY IN WAITING by Debby Jones & Jackie Kendall

EPIDEMIC, How Teen Sex Is Killing Our Kids by Meg Meeker

PRINCESS KISS by Jennie Bishop



Pray:

- for stronger marriages in your congregation.
- for fidelity and fulfillment in marriages of those in ministry.
- for insulation against external and internal pressures that would undermine marriage relationships.
- for legislators and officials who seek to determine the legal definition of marriage.
- for caring, compassionate churches who will reach out to troubled families and teach strong marriage principles
- for the Atwoods as they minister in churches through marriage retreats.
- for mentors who will advise and guide young couples through the often difficult first years of married life.



"Good strong homes make good strong churches."



THAT'S ONE REASON Home Missions Missionary Assistance Director Richard Atwood and his wife Sandy lead marriage retreats. As a former pastor and home missionary, he's aware of the family challenges churches face. "We're reaching people who are unchurched. They don't have a good model for marriage; we have to teach them." God is affording the Atwoods that opportunity. Over the past few years, they've conducted ten marriage retreats, mainly in mission churches, with more scheduled in 2006.

However, new Christians and mission churches aren't the only ones who've benefited. The Atwoods were the featured speakers at the recent WNAC/ Master's Men Marriage Enrichment Conference, October 28-30, in Chattanooga, TN.

This retreat drew 41 couples from 10 states. The largest delegation, nine couples came from Fellowship FWB in Kingsport, TN. The group included ministers, church leaders and laity with marriage length ranging from four months to fifty years. A weekend away for some, the event served as official honeymoon for at least two couples. For many, this was their first retreat. All came with one goal—to strengthen their marriages.

Using interactive activities, drama, film clips and humor, the Atwoods identified the various pressures weighing on marriages today, and offered Scriptural principles and practical advice for marriage building.

The sessions also included times of worship, congregational singing and special music. A candlelight dinner highlighted the Saturday evening session. Blocks of free time gave couples opportunity for moments alone or with friends.

The in-hotel setting made for comfort and convenience. Several commented on the relaxed atmosphere and the warm spirit they sensed throughout the weekend.

During the final session, participants gave testimonies concerning the retreat. One attendee shared of her brother's recent affair and how God had spoken to her and her husband about the importance of their home and serving God together. The retreat concluded with couples joining in a circle of prayer for all homes represented.

PICTURED: Fellowship church group, (TN); After service laughter; Making music together; 50th anniversary couple, Don and Mary Neal, (IN); Newlyweds Nathan and Celina Thomas (KY); Enjoying the moment; Worship leader Joshua Riggs (TN) sings to his wife, Allison; Jim and Geri Baker (OH) and Samuel and Wendy Shumate (AL) chat during dinner.



Other Prayer Concerns



—Pray that Texas missionary Jarvis Reed's recent surgical procedure will stop the fluid leakage in his eye, averting blindness.

—Pray that God would give wisdom and direction as FWBIM's directors and Advisory Council meet January 20-21.

—Pray that Randy Puckett (TX) can find suitable, affordable property for a church building. His growing congregation presently meets in a school.

—Pray for logistics concerning a church/outreach center in Alpedrete, Spain. FWB missionaries recently gained city approval to establish the first evangelical church in the city's 500-year history.

—Pray for Scott Warren (UT) to seize outreach opportunities as chaplain of a minor league hockey team.

—Pray for healing for Keith Bartlett (CA) who suffers from a degenerative disease affecting his hips.

—Pray for continued results from Christmas outreaches in mission works throughout the world.

A DOZEN DOSES OF *family* FUN



by Karen Walker

This time of year, when it gets dark outside practically right after lunch and the days seem so long, it's not easy to keep a merry heart. Easy? No—but not impossible. It absolutely takes a decision to think of and look for fun ways to resurrect your family/kids back to the land of the living. Fun does not knock on your door (unless you have a sanguine neighbor). So, here's an idea list to get you started in the right direction. Truthfully, you could do some of these things and still not have fun (especially if you threaten your kids to grin and bear it). Fun begins with family taking focus off themselves and joining in an activity together. The activity turns into a memory and the memories turn into a great winter after all.

1. VIDEO NIGHT VOTE Can't decide on a movie? Take a vote and keep it a secret until time to watch the movie. Or drop a few hints throughout the day to heighten the suspense. Don't forget the popcorn! Try eating it with chopsticks. Serve People Chow (See recipe next page) and dish it up in (NEW) dog food bowls.

2. SAFARI HUNT Hide one (or more) small-stuffed animals throughout the house and turn off lights. Use flashlights to find the "wild" animals.

3. COOKIE CAPERS Choose a cookie recipe that everyone likes or make more than one kind. If time is limited, let Pillsbury's dough boy help you with the preliminaries. The emphasis is involving everyone in the process. Have one person put cookies on sheet, another get out the fancy dishes (paper plates) and glasses

for milk, etc. Or buy plain sugar cookies and purchase cake frosting tubes to decorate them. For a real treat, why not pack some up and sneak over to someone's house in your neighborhood (or a person from your church). Knock on the door and leave the package, labeled "From the Cookie Caper Family."

4. CAMPING SHEETS Get out your largest size sheets and tons of clothespins. Everyone begins building one giant family tent to sleep in. For those attached to your mattress at the hip, build the tent in your bedroom (around your bed). Kids can sleep in sleeping bags. Be sure to tell some funny stories. (By the way, smores can be made just as well in your microwave as on a campfire.)

5. CRAFT NIGHT With girls, the reaction may be pure excitement. With boys, this idea may get the moans, but there are some projects that boys can enjoy. An excellent resource is FamilyFun.com. (Not online? Family Fun's monthly magazine can be found in most public libraries.) The lip gloss recipe below is a quick and easy way to get girls started. For boys, let them make their own play-doh (recipe below), then create animal sculptures and cars. Recycle empty boxes to make car tracks or villages. Refrigerator boxes make great boats. Be sure to name the family boat (i.e. Walkers on Water).

6. SILLY SMILES Read joke books together. (Consider a trip together to the library to find new ones).

Have a contest to see who laughs first, or how many jokes it takes to get a smile.

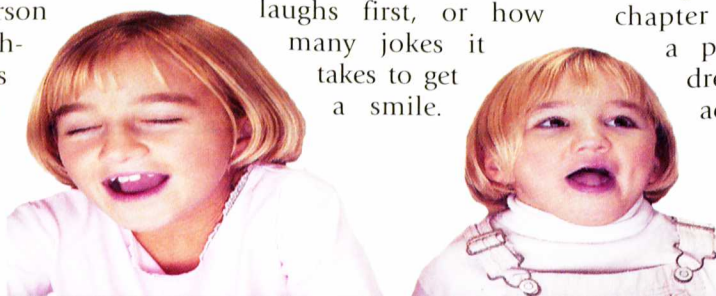
Measure with a ruler everyone's biggest smile and record it on paper just as you would his or her height.

7. TORTILLA SNOWFLAKES Cut a snowflake pattern in a flour tortilla (as you would in construction paper.) Place in a 400-degree oven on lightly greased cookie sheet for approximately five minutes. Remove from oven and sprinkle with cinnamon sugar. For less mess, give everyone a disposable pie pan and use the dish for both baking and eating.

8. ART EXHIBIT Everyone receives a blank canvas (poster board or construction paper) and must use markers, crayons or paints to create their own work of art. After all works are completed, conduct an award ceremony in which every one wins a prize. Give ribbons for different categories: best use of color, most creative, most lifelike, best attention to detail, best use of color green, etc. For added delight, why not take down some pictures and brighten a room with your new artwork for a few days?

9. PLAY RESTAURANT Designate waiters, waitresses (use aprons), customers, busboy, and chef (Buy a chef hat—valuable when cooking with kids.) Use a small pad of paper to take orders. Make up names for food on the menu. (Example: instead of macaroni and cheese, call it Chef's Special or Worms in Afraido Sauce.)

10. CHARACTER ACCESSORIES Begin reading an age-appropriate book together, a few pages or a chapter at each sitting. Choose a particular character to dress up as, using only accessories (i. e. cowboy



hat, scarf, glasses, belt, shoes) but not the whole costume.

11. **GAME FACE ON** Play old-fashioned board games, dominoes or old maid card games. Tired of playing the same games? Try a game swap with another family.

12. **SCAVENGER HUNT** Decide whether to find items inside or use the activity as a chance to get out of the house. Some suggested ideas for out-of-the-house hunts include finding: a license plate from another state; someone who looks like a celebrity; car with a spoiler bar; store sign with at least one letter not lit; and a penny from the pastor.

Reading this article is one thing. Picking and doing the activities is when the merry times start. If you do not have children at home, borrow some from church or your neighborhood. I'm certain parents would be *happy* to lend them to you for a little while. Hey, it's a long winter for everybody.

PEOPLE CHOW

- 6 oz. semi-sweet chocolate pieces
- 6 oz. milk chocolate pieces
- 1-cup creamy peanut butter
- 1 stick margarine
- 1 box of Crispix cereal
- 2 cups of powdered sugar

Melt first four ingredients together. Pour into large bowl (or large brown paper grocery bag works great) the Crispix and melted mixture. And add the powdered sugar and mix (or shake) well. Let cool and serve in NEW dog food bowls.

LIP-SMACKING LIP GLOSS

- 1 Tbsp. solid vegetable shortening
- 1-tsp honey
- 1 packet unsweetened flavored Kool-Aid
- ¼ tsp hot water

Mix shortening and honey together then in separate bowl mix water and Kool-Aid until the powder is dissolved. Add the water/Kool-Aid mixture to the shortening/honey mixture until right consistency. (Can be kept up to 3 days)

PLAY DOUGH

- 1-cup plain flour
- 1-cup water
- ½ cup salt
- 1 Tbsp. oil
- 1 tsp cream of tartar
- Food coloring (optional) or Unsweetened Kool-Aid

Mix together, Cook until it starts pulling away from pan. Remove from heat and kneed. Place in plastic bags or containers to store.

Karen Walker is Junior Church director at Huntsville FWB Church, AL, and early elementary writer for CLEAR curriculum. She practices family fun with her husband Kevin and children Anna (21) and Caleb (11).

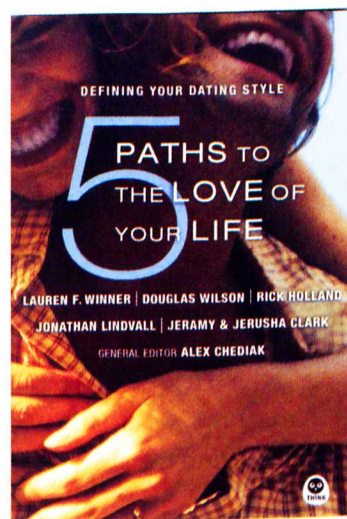


5 **PATHS TO THE LOVE OF YOUR LIFE** is excellent reading material for any single man or woman who desires to please God while pursuing a successful, life-long commitment to a marriage partner. Because this piece acknowledges many realistic situations and potential problems couples may face during each stage of courtship/dating, one can evaluate which approach is a better fit for him/her as an individual.

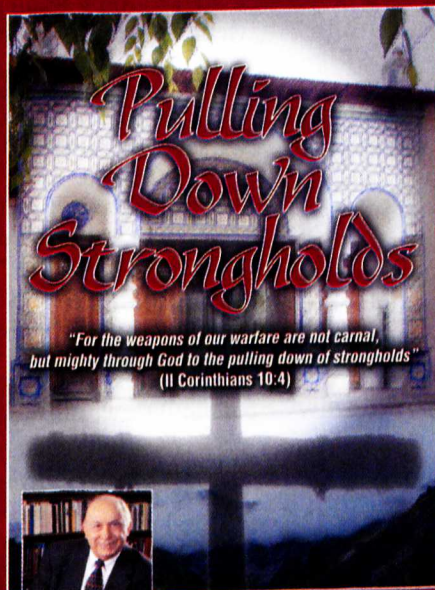
In a more conservative courtship style of dating, some conflicts may arise in the father exercising too much control over his daughter's relationship. For example, he may end the relationship to exercise his authority in her life even if the suitor is a loving, genuine Christian and his daughter is completely happy in the relationship. In a contrasting dating relationship, the father may not have any authority in his daughter's life and may give her away in marriage even if he feels that it is not in his daughter's best interest. Here, we see two extremes that can be blended to accomplish a healthy balance.

Although each of the five approaches to finding a mate is unique, they unite in recognizing Christ as the most essential element for a holy and pure relationship. Most importantly, this book challenges singles to focus on the sovereignty of God.

—reviewed by April Bybee, Development Assistant, FWBIM



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a funny thing happened—life

missionaries and funny stories

just seem to go together. Entering a new culture or community, unaccustomed to customs—the bobbles are bound to happen. Learning a new language lends itself to laughter. Tammy Lancaster can testify to this. Her first Sunday in the country as a missionary, a man asked her how she liked Uruguay. She responded, "*Te Quiero*." (I want you.)

Rookie missionaries Matt and Cristina Price recently left a store in Albertville, France. Unsuccessfully trying to drive, shift, and buckle his seatbelt all with one motion, Matt needed help. Thinking he had learned the word for seatbelt, he asked Cristina, "Can you help me buckle my *singe*?" She looked at him and started laughing hysterically. He had asked, "Can you help me buckle my monkey?"

During her first week of language school, missionary to Spain, Rachel Donahue sat down to read a short newspaper article, confident in her language abilities for such a simple task. The headline caught her eye—something about a *pastor alemán* and his *compañero de trabajo*. She was intrigued. Why would a German preacher attack his friend, a security guard at work? Going word-by-word through the article with a dictionary, she came to the end, only to discover that the German shepherd had been taken to the pound. "I really felt silly," she confessed, "but I definitely learned my lesson: don't always take things literally."

Language can be confusing even in the USA. Missionaries David and Pam Potete, Chicago, IL, recall, "Early in our mission work, we planned a Fall Harvest party with games, activities, and refreshments. Our flier mentioned

a 'Dress the Turkey' activity. Two senior ladies came. As the party went on, they asked when we were going to have the turkey dressing class. They had come expecting a cooking class on how to prepare and stuff a turkey. When the ladies realized that Dress the Turkey was a children's game, we all had a good laugh. Since then, we carefully consider how we word our fliers. In spite of the confusion, the ladies did stay for the rest of the party and have since come to other church parties just to watch the kids."

Add culture and customs to conversation and the chances for errors increase. Jaimie Lancaster remembers this incident from their family's first year on the field.

Serving alone in Montevideo, Uruguay, we decided to take a vacation and go camping. With only enough money to buy a tent and rent a car, we left to go see a rock in the center of the country; the site was closed. Looking on the map, I found a small road that went directly to the coast. We wound up traveling 80 kilometers on a back-country dirt road. The only living things we saw were sheep.

We arrived at a military camping grounds at dusk and quickly set up the tent. No pillows, no sleeping bags, no cots—we were going to rough it. That's when my two small sons suggested, "Hey dad, let's build a bonfire like we did in Alabama." Finding pinecones and dry wood, we amassed a huge pile of brush. When I lit the wood, 20-foot high flames greeted me.

Within seconds, a group of Uruguayans ran over and asked, "What are you doing? You can't build a fire that big! You have to put it out." Sadly, the words for *to put out* and *to pay* sound really similar, espe-

cially when people are shouting at you. I reached for my wallet.

"No, you have to put it out," they repeated then asked if I had shovel, sand, bucket or water. I had none. Together with 30 Uruguayans working frantically, we put out the fire. Apparently, people are only supposed to build little fires, especially if it hasn't rained in two months.

The post-script to the story came the following day. We awoke that morning, smelling like smoke and stiff from sleeping on the ground. We drove north and found a hotel for \$25 on the Brazilian border. That night, on the Brazilian side of the city, a woman walked up to me and asked "Are you going to build a fire tonight?" My fire building skills were now internationally known."

In missionary families, as in any home, children contribute to comedy. Rhode Island missionary wife Christy Reynolds recalls that one day, while working at the computer, she heard her missionary husband exclaim, "Sarah, what are you doing?" She walked into the kitchen to find their two-year-old daughter on the counter, completely naked, coloring herself with green food coloring. This adorable *hulk*, was colored so thoroughly, she even turned her bathwater green.

Missionary Geneva Poole's grandson was visiting his Brazilian grandmother's house. Geneva's son was working on the car on the other side of the street and the little guy wanted to cross over to be with his dad. Since the grandmother's house was on a small downgrade, she cautioned, "Andrew, look up and down before you cross the street." He came to the curb, looked straight up and then down at his feet and

and laughs on the mission field

ran across the street, doing exactly what she had told him.

Learning to laugh with others at yourself is a helpful prerequisite for any missionary endeavor. The mission church in Providence, Rhode Island meets at a local school, so a trailer full of sound equipment, hymnals and other items must be unloaded and set up each week. Instead of a bench for the keyboard, they use a more portable drummer's "throne." One morning when missionary Christy Reynolds sat down to play the piano for service, she kept going down. The stool had collapsed under her. Needless to say, she now pushes down on it before she sits, making sure the legs are locked in place.

Laughter is fair play in this congregation. During last month's men's prayer breakfast at the Reynolds' home, husband and chef Bill was puzzled. The burners were on high, but the bacon wasn't cooking. Half an hour later, he discovered that he had turned on the opposite burners. When he told the church the next Sunday, every woman in the congregation laughed out loud, especially his missionary wife.

Jeff and Donna Crabtree, now missionaries in Canada, experienced a run of church break-ins while Jeff was pastoring the First FWB Church in Roanoke, Virginia. The church's alarm system seemed to be going off every other night.

One night it sounded and Jeff answered the phone. He dressed in about two seconds and headed out the door, walking along the shadows of the house, down toward the church, which stood within sight of their house. He thought if he could get to the back of the building, he might be able to catch whoever was inside. Donna watched as he disappeared into the dark.

Within seconds Jeff came running back toward the house as if lightning had struck him. Donna

supposed the burglar had spotted him and was chasing him. In reality, he was being chased by a skunk. She's never seen him run so fast, either before or since that incident.

June McVay, missionary to Spain, tells this story on her husband Sam. "We were taking a language refresher course after our first term and furlough. Driving home from classes, Sam was cut-off by an anxious motorist who was in a hurry to get into the HOV lane. Sam scolded the driver for his reckless driving, as well as for the fact that he was not obeying the law. (HOV use requires more than one person in the car, and this man was alone.) Then Sam looked over at the passenger's seat where I usually sit, and realized I wasn't there. I had been sick and hadn't gone to class that day. He was also driving solo in the HOV lane."

Sometimes the funny happens as missionaries return and readjust within their native culture. One missionary family traveling on stateside assignment saw the sign, *DEER XING*. The wife said, "What in the world! *DEER XING*? The husband said, "Oh, that is a new breed of deer they have imported from China."

Coming home to begin their most recent stateside assignment, Missionaries Jim and Vicki Sturgill found themselves standing in a very long line, waiting to be processed out of Brazil through immigration. Jim says,

We were making friends with others in the line when a young airline employee questioned us, looking for a lady who had requested a wheelchair. Learning the chair wasn't for Vicki, the employee added, "Anyway, you elderly people don't need to wait in this long line. When I come back by, go with me." Within minutes she returned, took us out of the line, up to the officer's desk

and said, "Please process these elderly passengers next." He did, and we walked into the gate area to board our plane. Far enough away from the officer's desk not to be overheard, Vicki turned to me with a totally deadpan look and said, "Aren't you glad I don't dye my hair?"

The week before Cote d'Ivoire missionaries were evacuated to the States, missionary Alice Smith went to Goumère to attend the National Association meetings of the Ivorian FWB churches. She stayed with her teammates, Verlin and Debbie Anderson, who were busy as bees moving their belongings to Bondoukou, packing for five people and receiving visitors including Missions Director James Forlines, Clint Morgan, Mike Cousineau, Sean Warren, Shane Davison, and the African Christians who came by on a regular basis. Obviously, life was extremely hectic. With vehicle and trailer loaded for Bondoukou, Verlin decided to take a shower and change clothes. Debbie, the children and Alice sat in the living room waiting for him. In just a few minutes, he appeared in the entryway and started giving orders regarding additional things that needed to be done. Noticing grins and lack of response to his instructions, he looked down at his boxers and realized that in all the rush he had forgotten just one thing—his trousers.

As with missionary humor, so with missionary life. Sometimes you just have to be there to fully get the punch. Evangelism on the frontlines can be difficult and demanding. Intense moments call for emotional release. The next time you feel a need for a funny, breathe a prayer for God's representatives throughout the world. A missionary out there could probably use a good laugh, too.

CHRISTIAN WANTED

Salary Grade R (Riches in Heaven)

JOB REQUIREMENTS

1. Must accept Jesus as personal Savior.
2. Must be disciplined in daily quiet times with Me.
3. Must be globally and missionary-minded to bring others to Me.
4. Must forsake all worldly focus for the furthering of My Kingdom.
5. Must think strategically to combat the fiery darts of the evil one.
6. Must be a multi-tasker with ability to manage time given on earth well.
7. Must perform good works daily.

HOURS NEEDED: Monday-Sunday 24-7

AS WE RESIDE IN THE BUSYNESS OF OUR WORK LIVES AT HOME OR IN THE WORKPLACE (OR BOTH), DO WE EVER PAUSE TO THINK ABOUT WHAT GOD'S JOB DESCRIPTION WOULD LOOK LIKE FOR OUR LIVES? This sobering thought came to me as I was going through the Bible study, *The Mind of Christ*. The subject matter was *works*, based on the book of James. As I read the Bible passage, I was brought to weeping before the Lord as He gently revealed His truth to me again—that the level of our faith is shown in what we do. Sounds simple doesn't it? Most of us have heard it all of our lives—that faith equals works and God's call in our lives is to "good works." This is when the Lord so poignantly revealed His job description to me.

In my 15-year career in international banking, I've had numerous job descriptions detailing things that, for the most part, I could say I was qualified for. However, there was, and continues to be, the frightful list of things that require the greater discipline in order to be successful in the workplace. My goal has always been to do my best, to manage well and be managed well. And, let's face it, at the end of the day, I want the next pay raise to reflect my hard earned efforts. These are obviously my goals, but I've come to learn that God has a similar plan for my spiritual work.

DID I QUALIFY? I knew I could check number one off the list for sure and the others were certainly works in progress. But how could I possibly be equipped for number three? "Must be globally and missionary minded to bring others to Me." He sweetly reminded me that as we consume His word daily and fall before Him, he is equipping us for the frightful list of things that require greater discipline in our

spiritual walk. As we begin to overflow with His goodness and His likeness, we begin dripping and spilling into the lives of our families and those we come in contact with each day—our two primary mission fields.

One of the most remarkable experiences, an example of this very thing, came by acting on a prompt from the Lord. He led me to ask a co-worker (merely an acquaintance at the time) I had worked with for years to a women's Bible study at our church called *Lord, Only You Can Change Me*. Little did I know that God would use this to transform my life as much as hers and grow both of us spiritually and as friends. Over the past four years, our love for God and each other has deepened through several more Bible studies and consistent prayer times together.

Are you acting on His prompting? It can change a life forever—possibly yours. My goals? I want to do my best, manage well and be managed well. And let's face it. At the end of the day, I want my next pay raise to have eternal value.



Shelly Miller resides in Donelson, TN, with husband Donnie, son Anderson (9) daughter Allison (4) and cockapoo Nestle (3). Active in the Donelson FWB Church, Shelly enjoys Bible studies, coffee, tea and winter fires. Throughout this year in CoLaborer, she will address concerns of Christian women in the workplace.

LABELS

IN THE WORKS



**Marjorie H.
Workman**

Executive Secretary-Treasurer

He was s-o-o-o-o-o cute in his Superman costume. Running. Waving his arms. Jumping off the church steps pretending to fly. "God is going to make me fly," he keeps telling his mother. McKinley is a three-year old with great expectations. No wonder the label on the costume box reads, "This costume will not enable your children to fly." Labels are important. In this case, the company does not want to be liable for a child who may get hurt attempting to fly.

How much attention do you pay to labels? Do you take medicine without reading the label? Have you ever misread a label? Mixed different pills in one bottle? Labels are very important to consumers and companies. Great attention is given to a label's colors, placement, wording, light reflection and on goes the list of concerns.

What about labels in women's ministry? Are we careful about our label? Is our label accurate? Sometimes labels are confusing like this one found on a bag of corn chips, "You could be a winner! No purchase necessary. Details inside." Frequently, young women refer to WNAC as their mother's organization or the old woman's group. Consequently, they have no desire to be a part of WNAC. This label is incorrect. If not corrected, the future of WNAC is in jeopardy (Judges 2:10).

It is imperative that we take steps to become transgenerational. How can we do this? I wish I had all the answers. I am listening. Reading. Questioning. Perhaps a good place to begin is in an age-blended small group—a Bible study. Although they may not voice it, many younger women are looking for a mentor. There is a need for bringing the wisdom of older women together with the spiritual hunger of the younger women (Titus 2:3-5).

In many churches, multigenerational ministries are reemerging. Maybe we have come full circle. In my youth, the debate was over separating the children from adult worship into junior, primary, and nursery churches—age based ministry. Now we're trying to develop transgenerational ministries. But, putting Humpty Dumpty back together again is proving very difficult. Although difficult, WAC groups must step over the generation gap.

One step toward breaking down barriers is bringing all ages together to work on

common goals that address each other's values—parenting, mentoring, missions, community. Since young mothers want to know how to be good parents, and grandmothers want to be good grandparents, why not work together? "It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men," said abolitionist Frederick Douglass. We need each other.

A second step is to understand transgenerational communication. We think we speak the same language but often are on different wavelengths. Learn to listen to each other. Finding ways to integrate the different generations is paramount.

Since a Great Commission women's group will want to provide study opportunities, why not cooperate in a Bible study? Women who seriously study the Bible will have a heart for the world (missions)—a label that WNAC wears quite proudly. Integrate groups toward common goals.

Sometimes it is not a matter of a confusing label; we simply don't have any label. Would you think of buying a can of food without a label? Or one with a cracked, peeling, faded label? Of course not. You would have no idea what you were getting. Some groups are like that. They just meet with no definite plans to do anything. Consequently, they just grow older and older, eventually disbanding because "nobody wants to or is able to do anything."

Labels tell what you can expect a product to do. **"To provide opportunities for women to understand and fulfill the Great Commission through their responsibilities in the family, in the church, in the community, and around the world."**—this is WNAC's label. All that we do should be sifted through this purpose statement. So, stay focused. Encourage and minister to all the women of the church, helping them to build strong families. Look around. Take on a community project in order to present Christ through your good deeds. Be visionary. Look beyond your local church walls and see a world in darkness waiting for the True Light. Develop a strategy to impact the Kingdom where you have opportunities. Sometimes our expectations are unrealistic, but more often, we underestimate what we can do. Live up to the WNAC label—make a difference in your home, church, community, and world.

Straight from the Heart



The 2006 WNAC Creative Arts Contest

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